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Samora Moises MACHEL
(Phonetic: maSHELL)

MOZAMBIQUE

President (since
June 1975)

Addressed as:
Mr. President



As president of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) since May 1970, Samora Machel directed his country's struggle for independence, negotiated the final peace settlement with the Portuguese, and became Mozambique's first President at independence in June 1975. According to the Constitution, as FRELIMO head he is ex officio Commander in Chief of the People's Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique.

An ardent revolutionary whose philosophy is a mixture of Marxism-Leninism, Maoism and Tanzanian socialism, Machel has impeccable revolutionary credentials: He is from peasant stock; has personally experienced the humiliations of colonialism; is steeped in Marxist-Leninist rhetoric; has participated in a national liberation movement; and is strongly committed to the goal of "national liberation." At his inauguration he dedicated himself to creating "the first truly Marxist state in Africa."

Since independence Machel has proceeded rapidly to consolidate his power, to downgrade or purge potential rivals and to institute a regimented, militarized Marxist-Leninist state, patterned after China and Tanzania. He has become the dominant figure in the country and has completely overshadowed any rival. As head of the party, government, army and secret police, he wields tremendous power and does not hesitate to use it to enforce his programs and ideology. Theoretically Machel shares power with other members of FRELIMO's Executive Committee, but in practice he relinquishes only as much power as he chooses.

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Foreign Policy

The Mozambican President has a "two camp" perception of the world and considers the socialist states as his natural allies and the West as the enemy and "center of imperialism." He has avoided taking sides in the Sino-Soviet conflict and seems intent on benefiting from a relationship with both Communist powers.

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His relations with Portugal are shaky; he prefers ties to the Portuguese Communist Party and has been unhappy with the trend away from the left in Portugal.

Machel is anxious to complete the process of liberation in Africa. He aided and supported the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola and is now heavily involved with the Zimbabwean nationalists. He is the youngest and most militant of the five "frontline" Presidents who are coordinating their efforts to insure a quick return to majority rule in Rhodesia. Machel would prefer a military solution, but serious economic problems, stepped-up Rhodesian incursions into Mozambique and the apparent ineffectiveness of the Zimbabwe guerrillas (based in Mozambique) have forced him to reconsider and turn reluctantly to negotiations to find a quick solution.

Personal Data

The 44-year-old Machel is a member of the Shangana tribe.

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In his press appearances Machel has been impressive, projecting a warm, witty personality and giving an open, articulate presentation. The President speaks Portuguese and some French. His wife, Graca, is Minister of Education and Culture. Machel received the Lenin Peace Prize in June 1977.

Career Highlights

1963	Joined FRELIMO and received guerrilla training in Algeria
1966-74	Commander in chief, guerrilla operations
May 1970-date	President, FRELIMO
Jun 1975-date	President

23 September 1977

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